

2.2 Middle Kingdom 2050 BCE- 1781BCE



The Middle Kingdom

- Strong central government broke down at the end of the Old Kingdom
- Now local and provincial officials became more powerful
- For the next 150 years, Egypt was engulfed in civil wars

The Middle Kingdom

- By 2050 BCE Egypt was reunited under Theban Kings (who would rule for the next 250 years)
- Originally ruled from Thebes then moved the capital city to Memphis
- Amon, local Theban deity, but during the middle Kingdom, he was merged with the sun God Re to become Amon-Re, an Egyptian national God

The Middle Kingdom



Amon-Re

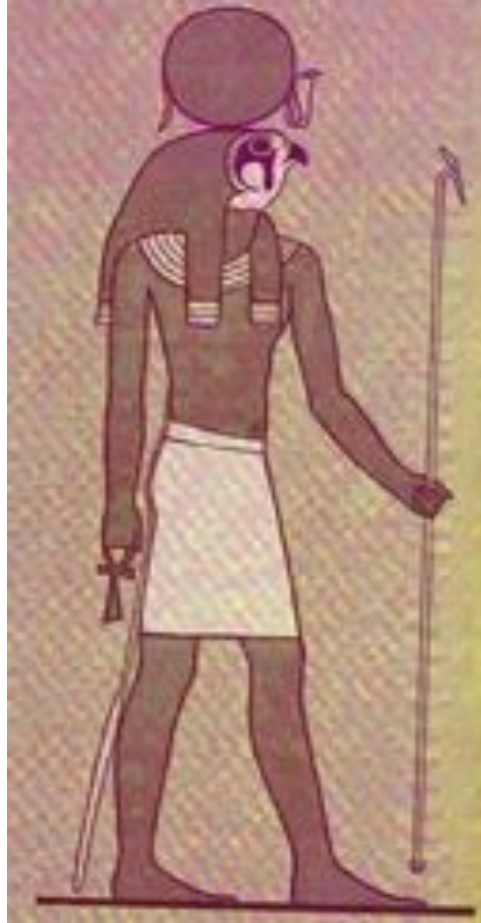
- Considered King of the Gods
- Sun God: Took three forms depending on what time of day it was



Amon-Re



Morning
Khepri



Ra
Midday



Atum
Afternoon

Amon-Re

- Morning: he becomes the God of the Scarab beetle. The mythology behind this came from observing the dung beetle laying its eggs in the dung, then rolling it into a ball.
- The ball was round, radiated heat, and then gave life to the new beetles. It resembled the sun to the ancient Egyptians' eyes.
- When Ra was Khepri, he was depicted as having a Scarab as a head

Amon-Re

Midday

- He was his own self at this time, which is usually depicted in the shape of a man with a falcon head.
- This can be confusing since Horus was also depicted as a man with a falcon head...
- ...but Ra wore a sun disk encircled by a cobra on his head, while Horus wore a crown.

Amon-Re

Afternoon

- In the afternoon, Ra took the shape of the God Atum who is the original creator of the universe.

Amon-Re

- Other than creator of Universe, he also steering the solar boat that carried the souls of the dead through the underworld.
- Temple at Karnak is dedicated to Amon-Re



The Middle Kingdom

- Economic and political boundaries of Egypt were expanded.
- Egypt was engaged in a vast trading network that centered on the Mediterranean Sea
- A ship was found off the coast of Turkey, carrying:

The Middle Kingdom



Copper Ingots- Possibly used as a form of currency (Cyprus)



Mycenaean pottery (Greece)



Tin Ingots- also possibly used for currency (Asia)

The Middle Kingdom



Amber beads (Baltic)



Glass and Ivory (Syria)

The Middle Kingdom

- Interchange of such a variety of cultures had a great significance, more than just the exchange of material goods
- Artistic expression, technology, building methods, calendars, mathematics and writing